68 PAGES

INTRODUCING THE HORRIBLE HEAP!!

PSYCHO™

MARCH 1971

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THE MOST *EXCITING* CHARACTER IN YEARS! THE MIND OF A MAN— IN A BODY OF EARTH-MATTER!

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PSYCHO

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BEGINNING . . . THE HEAP

The mind of a sensitive, intelligent man in the body of "earth matter." How? Why? Find out! ! Read about the circumstances which lead to the start of this continuing dramatic series . . . the inconceivable HEAP.

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DEATH'S STRANGER

Arthur Ashe killed to protect his secret of immortality. How many life times can a man live in order to erase these unforgettable killings?

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DREAM PLANET

Is it true that dreams are child's play? The voyagers of one advanced civilization don't think so, and chances are you won't either, after the DREAM PLANET

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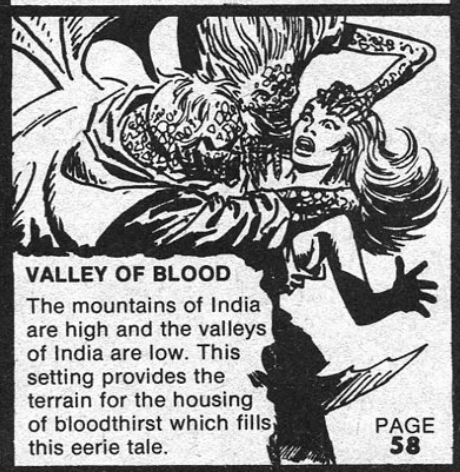

VALLEY OF BLOOD

The mountains of India are high and the valleys of India are low. This setting provides the terrain for the housing of bloodthirst which fills this eerie tale.

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REVOLUTION

Man was not meant to be an attraction of a sports' arena. Find out why revolt was the only answer to the sadistic desires of a mad ruler.

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QUEST

An interest in a painting can be more than cultural . . . it can provide the QUEST that every man, at one time or another, must go through. See for yourself, if you dare!

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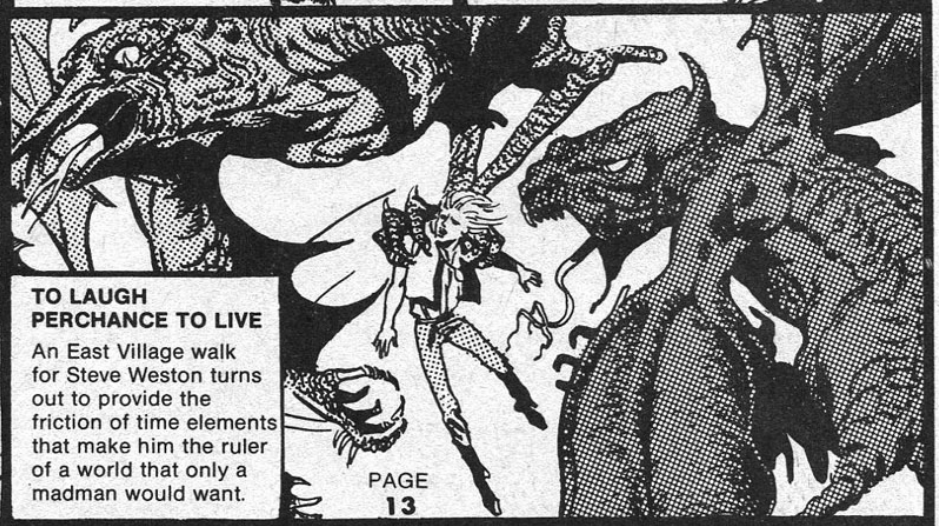

TO LAUGH PERCHANCE TO LIVE

An East Village walk for Steve Weston turns out to provide the friction of time elements that make him the ruler of a world that only a madman would want.

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THE ROOM WAS NOW MAYHEM! CHAOS! -- AND TERROR AND VIOLENCE! BULLETS WHINED, SPITTING, SPLITTING, PIERCING THE FLESH OF THE MONSTROSITY, THE HEAP, AND, LODGING THERE, DID NO FURTHER DAMAGE TO THE HEAP'S VICIOUS HIDE! THE HEAP, DRUNK WITH SWEET WINE OF VENGEANCE, PUMMELED AND SHREDDED HIS VICTIMS, THINKING ALL THE WHILE HOW HE HAD BEEN A NORMAL MAN, JUST A WEEK BEFORE, AND HAD SAT COMFORTABLY IN THAT VERY ROOM...
AARGHHH!

Script by Chuck McNaughton • Art by Ross Andru • Inked by Mike Esposito

BACK WHEN LIFE WAS A GROOVE FOR JIM ROBERTS, WHO NEVER SAID HE HIMSELF WAS HANDSOME, FOR HE DISLIKED REPEATING WHAT EVERYONE ELSE SAID--PARTICULARLY HIS FIANCEE, AUDREY BRIARLEY...
WONDERFUL, LOVER! YOU'RE ALWAYS THINKING OF ME, OUR FUTURE...
$100,000 INSURANCE POLICY WITH YOU AS BENEFICIARY, LOVE. BILL RYAN THOT IT BEST.
RRRING
OOPS-- THE PHONE...
IT COULD ONLY BE PROFESSOR MONTGOMERY ELLIOTT HIS OWN SELF...
RIGHT ON, MONTY...
NO LIP, JIM--I KNEW WHEN McMANUS FARMS CALLED AND COMPLAINED THAT THE CROP DUSTER DIDN'T SHOW YOU'D BE AT AUDREY'S.
GET TO WORK!
ELLIOTT PESTICIDES CROP DUSTING SERVICE
I'LL KNOCK OFF THIS CAPER AND WE'LL PICK UP WHERE WE LEFT OFF!
LATER-- BABE!
WITHIN MINUTES AFTER TAKE-OFF...
SOMETHING'S WRONG. RUDDER DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT...
SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH ONE OF THE CABLES...
A TREACHEROUS POPPING SOUND, DROWNED BY THE ENGINE, IS FELT LIKE A SPASMIC HEARTBEAT...
WHIRRRRR
SNAP
UH-OH... GOING INTO A TAILSPIN...
HOW AM I GOING TO BEAT THIS?
--OH NO! ...NOSING RIGHT INTO THE RESTRICTED TRAINING AREA!!...
VEEEEEEEEEE

WHILE NOT VERY FAR AWAY AT A LOOKOUT TOWER WITHIN THE SECRET MILITARY BASE...

CAPTAIN! THAT EXPLOSION WASN'T SCHEDULED! A PLANE JUST ***CRASHED*** IN ZONE 19!

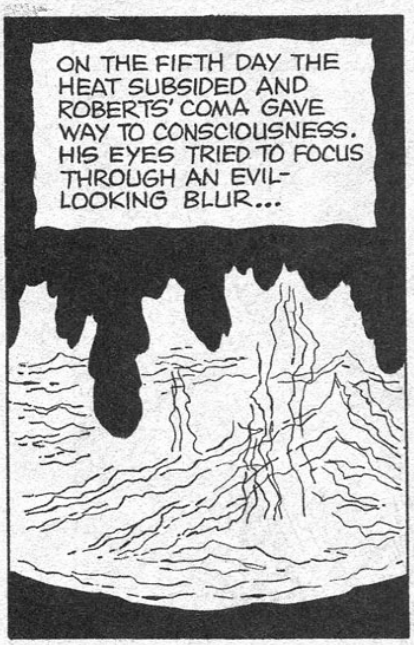
GOOD LORD! THAT'S THE ZONE WHERE WE'RE STORING THE ***SHP-OP NERVE GAS!***

THE CRASH STARTED A ***FOREST FIRE!***

AS HE LAY SUSPENDED IN HIS COMA-STATE AN ODD COMMINGLING OF NERVE-GAS AND PESTICIDES OCCURRED. A STRANGE METAMORPHOSIS WAS TAKING PLACE IN ROBERTS' BODY...

ON INTO THAT NIGHT, AND FOR THE NEXT FIVE NIGHTS THEREAFTER THE FOREST FIRE RAGED, AND WAS FEVERISHLY FOUGHT BY NERVOUS FOREST RANGERS AND INFANTRYMEN...

ON THE FIFTH DAY THE HEAT SUBSIDED AND ROBERTS' COMA GAVE WAY TO CONSCIOUSNESS. HIS EYES TRIED TO FOCUS THROUGH AN EVIL-LOOKING BLUR...



HIS VISION CLEARED AND HE SAW THE DIRTY BROWNS OF A BURNT FOREST. HE SAW SOMETHING ELSE-- DRIPPING DARK THINGS HANGING BEFORE HIS EYES...

BUT WHEN HE RAISED HIS HAND TO BRUSH THE DRIPPINGS FROM BEFORE HIS EYES AND SAW THE SICKLY SAGGING FLESH SHAKING ON HIS HAND HE BEGAN TO ***UNDERSTAND!***

JIM ROBERTS STOOD MIDST THE ASHES AND CHARRED RUINS AND SURVEYED HIMSELF--SURVEYED THE SAGGING LAYERS OF TUMOROUS FLESH, THE RIPPLING, SEEMINGLY MELTED BODY THAT WOULD SOME DAY BE KNOWN AS THE HEAP!
THE ONCE HANDSOME JIM ROBERTS STOOD IN SHOCK OF HIMSELF. THE HEAP SHUDDERED IN SELF-REVULSION!
THIS MUST BE A NIGHTMARE, A HORRIBLE DREAM... BUT IT'S NOT... IT'S NOT...
CHEMICALS... THE FIRE... SOMETHING IN THIS OFF-LIMITS AREA WAS RESPONSIBLE...
GOD, WHY ME? WHY ME?...
WHY WAS I TRANSFORMED INTO THIS HORRIBLE HEAP!
SUDDENLY THE SORE FLESH OF HIS SWOLLEN EAR LOBES PIERCED AT THE SOUND OF MEN'S VOICES...
THIS WAY, CAPTAIN! THE PLANE FELL HEREABOUTS!
NO RUSH, SERGEANT!
THOSE HEATED NERVE GAS CONTAINERS MAY STILL YET EXPLODE!
SELF-PITY WAS A LUXURY THE HEAP, JIM ROBERTS, COULD NO LONGER LAVISH UPON HIMSELF! NOW HE HAD SOMETHING ELSE TO DEAL WITH...ESCAPE--FROM HIS FELLOW MAN.
HE RAN WITH AMAZING SPEED, AND SOON WAS OUTSIDE THE RESTRICTED AREA AND INTO THE MAIN ROAD!
JIM, LOOK OUT!
W...WHAT IN BLAZES IS THAT?
SKREEEE
THUD

BLINDED WITH FEAR, RAGE AND PAIN, THE HEAP LASHED OUT AT HIS IMAGINED TORMENTOR!

WHUMP

GRAARGHH!

AARMMPH!

LEAVING THE UPTURNED TRAILER TRUCK BEHIND SPRAWLED LIKE SOME GIANT, WOUNDED METAL CATERPILLAR--THE HEAP LUMBERED ON--CAUGHT IN THE FRENZY OF HATE AND LUST FOR REVENGE, EVERY THROBBING PORE SCREAMING AT THE AGONY OF HIS PLIGHT...

GRAARGHH...AARMMPH!... SOUNDS...I CAN ONLY UTTER *SOUNDS!*...I CAN ONLY *THINK*... *SPEAK!*

ON HE BLUNDERED, STUMBLING THROUGH AN OLD CEMETERY VENTING HIS RAGE ON THE MUTE AND IMMOBILE TOMBSTONES THAT CHANGED TO STAND IN HIS REMORSELESS PATH.

FINALLY...HIS FURY ABATED, EXHAUSTION TOOK HOLD--HIS FLESH ACHED AND PULSATED WITH EACH AWKWARD STEP, WITH THE AID OF A DARKENING TWILIT SKY HE MANEUVERED HIS BULK TO THE TOWN'S GARAGE DUMP AND COLLAPSED...CAMOUFLAGED ...ALONE...UNDETECTED...TO REST...

DAWN'S FAINTEST GLIMMER FOUND THE HEAP RAVENOUSLY DEVOURING HIS BREAKFAST...

TO THINK WHAT I WOULD SOME DAY FIND TO BE EDIBLE...

DID THE FIRE CHANGE MY INSIDES, TOO?

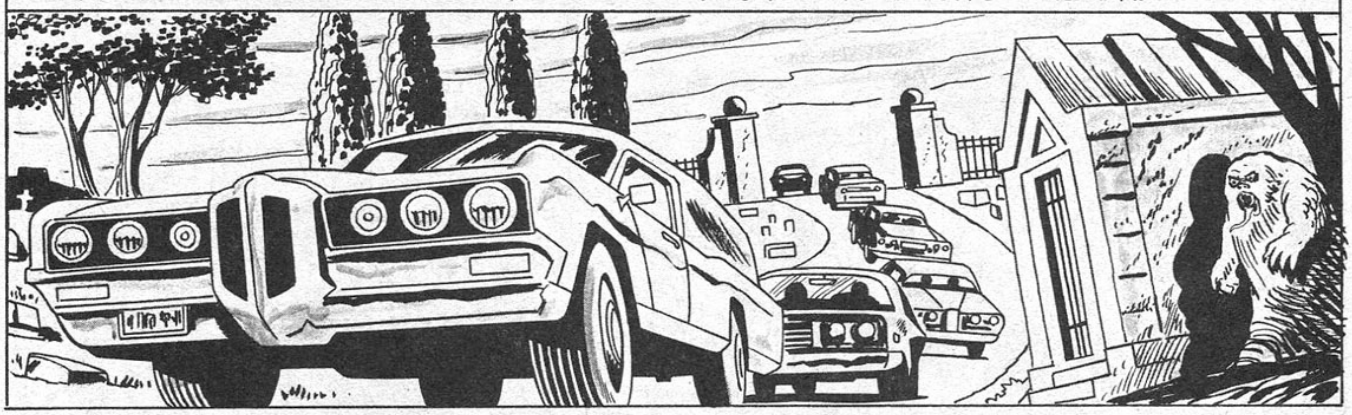
SKREEK!

ACROSS THE WAY FROM THE CITY DUMP WAS THE AREA GRAVEYARD. AS THE SUN ROSE, THE HEAP WATCHED UNNOTICED...

HURRY, GALLAGHER! WE STILL HAVE A GRAVE TO DIG REG'LER, AFTER WE CLEAN THIS DUCK'S COFFIN OUT!

RIGHT, YEH, RIGHT!

A FRIGHTENED MORNING SUN EKES ITS DISMAL WAY CAUTIOUSLY BEHIND A NET OF GRAY RAINCLOUDS, OBSCURED. UNNOTICED, LURKING, THE HEAP OBSERVES A FUNERAL PROCESSION CREEP OVER THE ROAD, FOLLOWING THE LARGE HEARSE AS THE BODY OF SOME GREAT BLACK SNAKE FOLLOWS ITS HEAD.



A MINISTER GESTURED LIKE A WELL-OILED MACHINE AND AND APPARENTLY LIGHT PINE BOX WAS INTERRED. JIM ROBERTS STOOD AGHAST AND VIEWED HIS OLD FRIENDS GATHERED AT HIS OWN FUNERAL!

AND SO, BRETHREN, WE COMMIT THESE REMAINS...

THERE WASN'T ENOUGH OF HIM LEFT TO BURY, PROF...

AN EMPTY PINE BOX'LL HAVE TO DO--

THERE'S **AUDREY, BILL RYAN** AND **PROF. ELLIOTT!**

I WONDER IF THEY'D WANT TO **SEE ME!** UGLY AS I **AM!**

WAIT A **MINUTE!!** RYAN'S BEING MORE THAN **CONSOLING,** THERE!

HE AND AUDREY SAID THEY HARDLY **KNEW** EACH OTHER **ONE WEEK AGO!**

SOMETHING **SMELLS!**

NOW THEY'RE WALKING AWAY TOGETHER LIKE **LOVERS!**

RYAN **SOLD** ME THE $100,000 **INSURANCE POLICY!**

--AND **AUDREY,** THE **BENEFICIARY!**

JEALOUS RAGE AND INDIGNATION OVERCOME JIM ROBERTS.

THE CABLE THAT SNAPPED ON MY PLANE WAS **NEW!**

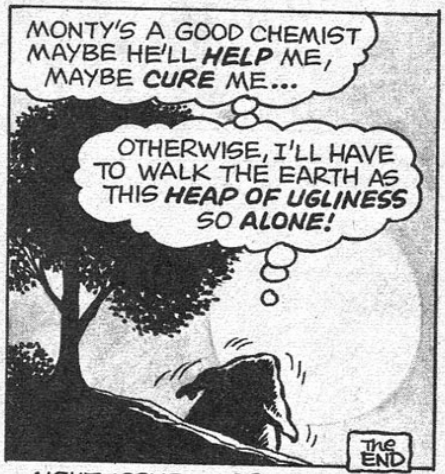
IT WAS PUT ON JUST THAT MORNING BY A MECHANIC WHO'S ALSO **BILL RYAN'S CHAUFFEUR.**

IT ALL BEGINS TO MAKE **SENSE!**

THE HEAP KEPT OUT OF VIEW. THE REST OF THE DAY, AND THAT NIGHT BEGAN TO PROWL!--OVERCOME WITH LUST FOR VENGEANCE, HE ALMOST FORGOT HIS DISFIGUREMENT.
BILL RYAN'S LIMOUSINE! HOW COZY!
WHAT A SUCKER I AM! WH...WHY DIDN'T I KEEP MY EYES OPEN! IF I HAD I WOULDN'T HAVE TO BE LIKE THIS...A WORTHLESS, UGLY HEAP!
AS PROMISED, $2,000 FOR EACH OF YOU FOR KEEPING YOUR MOUTHS SHUT!
AND NOW THAT ELLIOTT IS WITHOUT A PILOT TO SPRAY HIS NEW PESTICIDES, HE'LL GO BROKE AND I CAN BUY HIM OUT!
THEN I'LL BE ABLE TO RUN THIS COUNTRY!
RYAN'S MECHANIC AND THE GRAVE-ROBBERS! THE WHOLE WRETCHED CREW!
THEN SUDDENLY...
ALL YOU'VE PURCHASED IS DEATH!
CRAASH
LOOK AT ME! LOOK AT ME!
I'M JIM ROBERTS --THE MAN YOU THOUGHT YOU HAD KILLED!
BUT I SURVIVED TO BE HIDEOUS HEAP THAT CONFRONTS YOU!
GAARGHHHHH
W...WHAT?

AND AS THE HEAP STEALS OUT INTO THE NIGHT, HIS BLOODLUST SATIATED...
SSIRREEEE
WHA? SIREN AND--AND COP CARS!
AND THERE'S MONTY ELLIOTT--SHOWING THEM THE WAY!

'NEATH THE TERROR-STRICKEN MOON, JIM ROBERTS, THE HEAP, FEELS A RESURGENCE OF ONE THIN BREEZE OF TRUST...
SO, MONTY ELLIOT, MY ONE FRIEND, AT LEAST, REMAINED TRUE...
AND SMELLED SOMETHING ILL, AND DID SOMETHING ABOUT IT...


MONTY'S A GOOD CHEMIST MAYBE HE'LL HELP ME, MAYBE CURE ME...
OTHERWISE, I'LL HAVE TO WALK THE EARTH AS THIS HEAP OF UGLINESS SO ALONE!
THE END

NEXT ISSUE: MORE PAGES AS THE HORRIFIC

HEAP MEETS THE HORROR MASTER!

PROLOGUE:
MANHATTAN'S EAST GREENWICH VILLAGE. A PENSIVE, DISILLUSIONED FIGURE PLODS AND WONDERS. HIS NAME: STEVE WESTON. OCCUPATION: NONE. RESIDENCE: THE EAST COAST--USUALLY.
WHY DID I EVER COME TO THIS GOD-FORSAKEN HOLE?
WHY? TO LIVE IN THIS SLUM?
WESTON STROLLS THROUGH GARBAGE-STREWN STREETS, LITTERED WITH SELF-DESTRUCTION AND FUTILITY.
THE BUBBLE SURE BURST.
AND THESE TENEMENTS NOW HOUSE WREATHES OF WILTED FLOWER-CHILDREN...
JUST SNOBBISH RICH CHILDREN WHO CAME TO LIVE HERE FOR SPITE!
AND THE POOR--WHO NEVER WILL EVER ESCAPE!
AND THERE'S ALWAYS THE DOPE ADDICTS...
IN THE BIG CITY ONE LEARNS TO BE COOL ABOUT THEM
HMM...SEEMS HE TOOK AN OVERDOSE--HE'S CRUMBLING!
MMM--FEATHERS IN HIS HAIR. THE DISTRESS-SIGNALS OF A DYING MIND...
WHATEVER HAPPENED TO SIMPLE HORROR?
WE'VE ALL GROWN CALLOUS--COLD!
LONG AGO WE ALL RAN AWAY TO THIS MUFFLED ANGUISH!
BECAUSE WE, THE SO-CALLED "HIP" GENERATION WANTED TO LIVE FOR LOVE!
IT'S REALLY SORT OF FUNNY!--
AH-HA-HA-HEH!
AS STEVE WESTON CRIES A SICKLY LAUGH, FORCES BEYOND HIS CONTROL COLLIDE, AND HE BEGINS TO SLIP THROUGH A POCKET-WARP WHERE TWO DIMENSIONS TOUCH...

TO LAUGH, PERCHANCE TO LIVE!

WHEN TWO UNIVERSES INTERMESH ON TWO DIFFERENT PLANES OF EXISTENCE, SOMETIMES A FRICTION OCCURS... AND BURNS A PASSAGE-WAY 'TWEEN THEM. SOMETIMES BY ACCIDENT, SOMETIMES ON PURPOSE. SOME GET BURNT. SOME FALL THROUGH!...

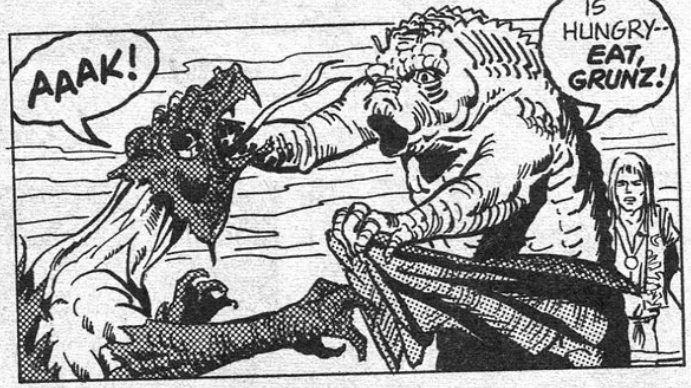
STEVE WESTON FALLS, SILENT ALONE, LOST, FALLS THROUGH THE SHADOW OF A RE-FLECTION. FALLS THROUGH A SPACE-WARP, PAST THE MYRIAD COLLAGES OF FLEETING GLIMPSES OF ALL POSSIBLE UNIVERSES, WHERE ALL CONCEP-TIONS OF SPACE-TIME-CONTINUUM MEET! STEVE WESTON FALLS THROUGH INTENSITY, AND PAST ALL THAT WOULD EVER, TO ANY EXTENT BE!

Script by Chuck McNaughton • Art by Jack Katz • Inked by Rich Buckler

GOOD LORD!
IT IS HIM! HIS NAME IS STEVE WESTON!
STEVE WES-TON--
HIS NAME-- STEVE WESTON!
STEVE WESTON!
MY NAME IS ATTEZARE, STEVE WESTON!
WE'VE WAITED LONG, STEVE WESTON!
LET ME TO HIM!
NO! I MUST GET TO HIM!
NO, ATTEZARE! ATTEZARE MUST TAKE HIM!
TAKE HIM TO THE GREAT THRONE!
NO! OH, GOOD LORD, NO!

SUDDENLY...
IN TIME, STEVE WESTON! IN TIME WE WILL MEET!
THE HONOR OF TAKING HIM TO THE THRONE MUST BE MINE!
HE'S MINE!
RELINQUISH! RELINQUISH!
AAAAAIEEE!

THE SEA SOON COLDLY BOILS WITH FROTH. WESTON SWIMS AND TIREDLY MUSES. HE IS TOO WORN OUT TO CARE...ONLY TO TREAD WATER AND MERELY OBSERVE THE MADNESS ABOUT HIM.



NO! NO! NOOOO!
AGAIN WE WILL MEET IN TIME, WESTON!
WHAT CAN MAKE A MAN A MANIAC?--FEAR, TERROR, FRUSTRATION, OR HOPELESS ANGUISH?
LEAVE ME ALONE!
WHY DON'T YOU ALL JUST LEAVE ME BE?
SKRAWWWK!
YOU TAUNT ME, AUSTERE GARGOYLE!
POUNCE, DAMMIT! I'M READY FOR YOU!
WHILE OVERHEAD...A FLOCK OF INTERESTED VISITORS SWOOPS, DIVES, A GRACEFUL SQUADRON OF SQUAWKS, SQUEALS, TALONS AND BARBED FEATHERS...
THE WINGED MISSILES SLASH THEIR WICKEDLY BEAKED FORMS DOWN, GRAB THEIR PREY AND WESTON IS ACCIDENTALLY BRUSHED OFF-CLIFF.
AS THE SHRIEKS OF THEIR DISMEMBERED DINNER PIERCE THE HEATED AIR, WESTON'S WRISTS POP AS HE CATCHES THE LEDGE.
SKRAAA!!!E!
RRAAWWK!
SKREE! SKREE!

WRISTS-- PAIN! PAIN --WRISTS!
IF I LET GO, THE PAIN WILL STOP...
NO! I REFUSE TO GIVE UP!
LET THOSE OTHERS DEVOUR THEMSELVES! I WILL...
LIVE!
BUT IS SURVIVING IN THIS WORLD LIKE THIS REALLY LIVING?
DAMMIT! OF COURSE IT IS!
THERE'S SOMETHING TO LIVE FOR IN ANY WORLD PAIN OR NO!
THIS WORLD CAN SURE GET A PERSON DOWN!
THERE MUST BE REFUGE FROM IT'S EVIL SOMEWHERE!
BEFORE THIS PLACE DRIVES ME MAD...
I'LL SHOW IT I CAN SURVIVE!
STEVE WESTON!
THAT'S MY NAME, ALL RIGHT! YOU'RE MY GAME!
I'LL STAND YOU ALL OFF!
IF YOU KNOW MY NAME, YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT, TOO!

WE KNOW THAT, STEVE WESTON!
SUDDENLY THE TERROR THE NIGHTMARE CREATURES GENERATE SWAYS AS THEY ATTACK EACH OTHER. CONFUSION SATURATES FOUL AIR. HOSTILITY FOAMS IT. PERPLEXITY GNAWS WESTON'S SKULL...
THEY'RE MAD!
EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM!
IF I CAN ONLY GET PAST THEM TO THAT PASS !
IF I COULD STAND OFF ANY OF THESE LUNATIC CREATURES!
WESTON DASHES FOR THE PASSE BETWEEN TWO SURREAL BLUFFS.
MADE IT!!
ATTEZARE!!
AHH, STEVE WESTON, WE ALL WANTED TO BRING YOU HERE--
BUT ONLY YOU COULD BRING YOURSELF!
WESTON'S HEART SKIPS A BEAT AT THIS THING ALL TOO WELL PLANNED! A HIDEOUS INEVITABILITY FOULS THE AIR, AS IF EACH THING TO HAPPEN WAS ONLY MEANT TO HAPPEN, LONG AGO...

EXAMINE YOUR LIKENESSES, STEVE WESTON. ARE THEY NOT WELL MADE?
DO YOU SEE IT ALL NOW?
NOW DO YOU BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND?
UNDERSTAND THE INEVITABLE!

WE HAVE WAITED EONS FOR YOU TO ARRIVE, MASTER!
WAITED FOR YOU TO COME TO RULE US!
GASP!
WELCOME, MASTER!
HAIL, YE STEVE WESTON!

A WAVE OF ANXIOUS SHOCK DELUGES STEVE WESTON. HE REACHES FOR SOMETHING TO STEADY HIM...AGAINST THE TIDE OF ENGULFING INSANITY...
ME?
RULE YOU? CANNOT YOU RULE YOURSELVES? I--
I'M NOT FIT TO RULE YOU-- OR ANY--

AN OCEAN OF DECAYING FLESH RUMBLES AND QUIVERS AT THESE WORDS OF REJECTION. A CANNY LIGHT NOW SHINES IN STEVE WESTON'S EYES.
AT LAST! NOW I SEE CLEARLY!

WHY, YOU WOEFUL ABOMINATIONS! YOU PITIFUL FRAUDS!
YOU CANNOT EVEN RUN YOUR OWN LIVES!--EVEN IN THIS--THIS HELL THAT WAS MADE FOR YOU?!!

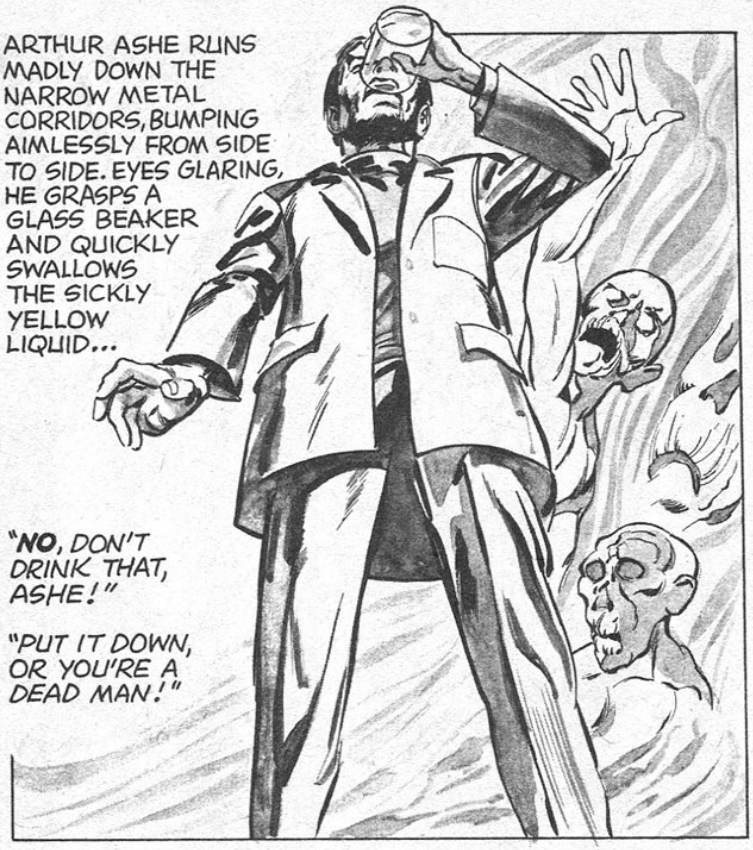
AND YOU ALL WANT ME TO LEAD YOU?!? AS IF I COULD!
WHY, I'D FAIL! AND YOU KNOW THAT! --EVEN WISH FOR THAT!
AND NOW I SEE WHY!
SQUEALS OF PLEASURE AND PAIN SURGE THROUGH THE CHARGED STALE AIR IN RESPONSE TO WESTON'S PROCLAMATIONS!
FOR THIS IS HELL!
AND HELL IS FOR THOSE THAT WISH TO FAIL!
IT'S ALL A VERY VERY BAD JOKE!
AND WITH THE QUENCHING RELEASE OF LAUGHTER, ANY HOLD THIS DIMENSION HAD ON STEVE WESTON LEAVES HIM, AND HE BEGINS TO WOOZILY DRIFT-SPIN BACK--BACK--ESCAPING BACK--
HA-AAAH-HA-HA-HA-HAAAA!
BACK TO THE REAL(?) WORLD...
AHH-HAA-HAW-HA-HAAAAAA!
GRO RY
CRIME
THE NEW NERVE
SAVAGE
STORY OF LIFE SOLD HERE
AGNEW KS ON
WAR IN
KILLER
END

A-BOMBS RAIN IN BRAZEN FURY ENGULFING AN ALMOST LIFELESS WORLD IN A BALL OF WHITE-HOT DEATH. STEEL BUILDINGS COLLAPSE IN THE STYGIAN BLAZE OF HELL'S FIRE, CASCADING DOWNWARDS TO STREET LEVEL, CRUMBLING BELOW ON THE MELTED ASPHALT GUTTERS.
AN ARTHUR ASHE LAUGHS... LAUGHS HYSTERICALLY AT HIS OWN PRIVATE JOKE. FOR AS ALL AROUND HIM PERISH IN THE WORLD'S END, ARTHUR ASHE WILL LIVE ON FOREVER. FOR HE IS...
DEATH'S STRANGER
DIE! ALL OF YOU... PERISH!
FOR NOW THE WORLD ENDS... AND MANKIND DIES... ALL SAVE FOR...
ARTHUR ASHE... THE IMMORTAL... ME!
HA HA HA HA HA HA
PALMER

Script by Marv Wolfman • Art by Tom Palmer • Inked by Tom Palmer

YOU'RE CRAZY...ALL OF YOU! IMMORTALITY IS NO SIN. IT'S LIFE...A FOREVER LIFE. JUST THINK WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE NEVER TO DIE!
AN ETERNAL HELL, ASHE. THAT'S WHAT IT WOULD BE. A FIRE-BREATHING HELL CLUTCHING AT YOU ALWAYS THROUGHOUT ETERNITY. THERE WOULD BE NO ESCAPE...EVER!
BUCKLER'S RIGHT, ASHE. JUST THINK FOR ONE MOMENT. NEW PEOPLE WILL CONTINUE TO BE BORN, BUT NO ONE WILL DIE!
WE'RE OVERCROWDED AS IT IS. IMAGINE WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE WITH IMMORTALITY!
THE URGENCY OF LIFE. THE CONSTANT GRASPING FOR KNOWLEDGE WOULD BE EVER GONE!
MAN WAS NOT MEANT TO LIVE FOREVER, ASHE DESTROY YOUR FORMULA NOW. DESTROY IT... TOTALLY!
NO!! YOU'RE JEALOUS. ENVIOUS THAT IT WAS I WHO REACHED OUT TOWARDS THE HEAVENS AND BECAME A GOD...A GOD OVER LIFE ITSELF!
BUT YOU WON'T STOP ME...YOU WON'T!
YOU'RE SPEAKING LIKE A MADMAN, ASHE! WE DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR GLORY OR YOUR FAME.
MOVE AWAY, ASHE. LET US INTO YOUR LAB. IF YOU WON'T DESTROY YOUR FORMULA, WE WILL!
IT'S FOR YOUR OWN GOOD, ARTHUR. PLEASE BELIEVE US!
NEVER! I WON'T LET YOU!
EVEN IF IT MEANS I'LL HAVE TO KILL YOU!

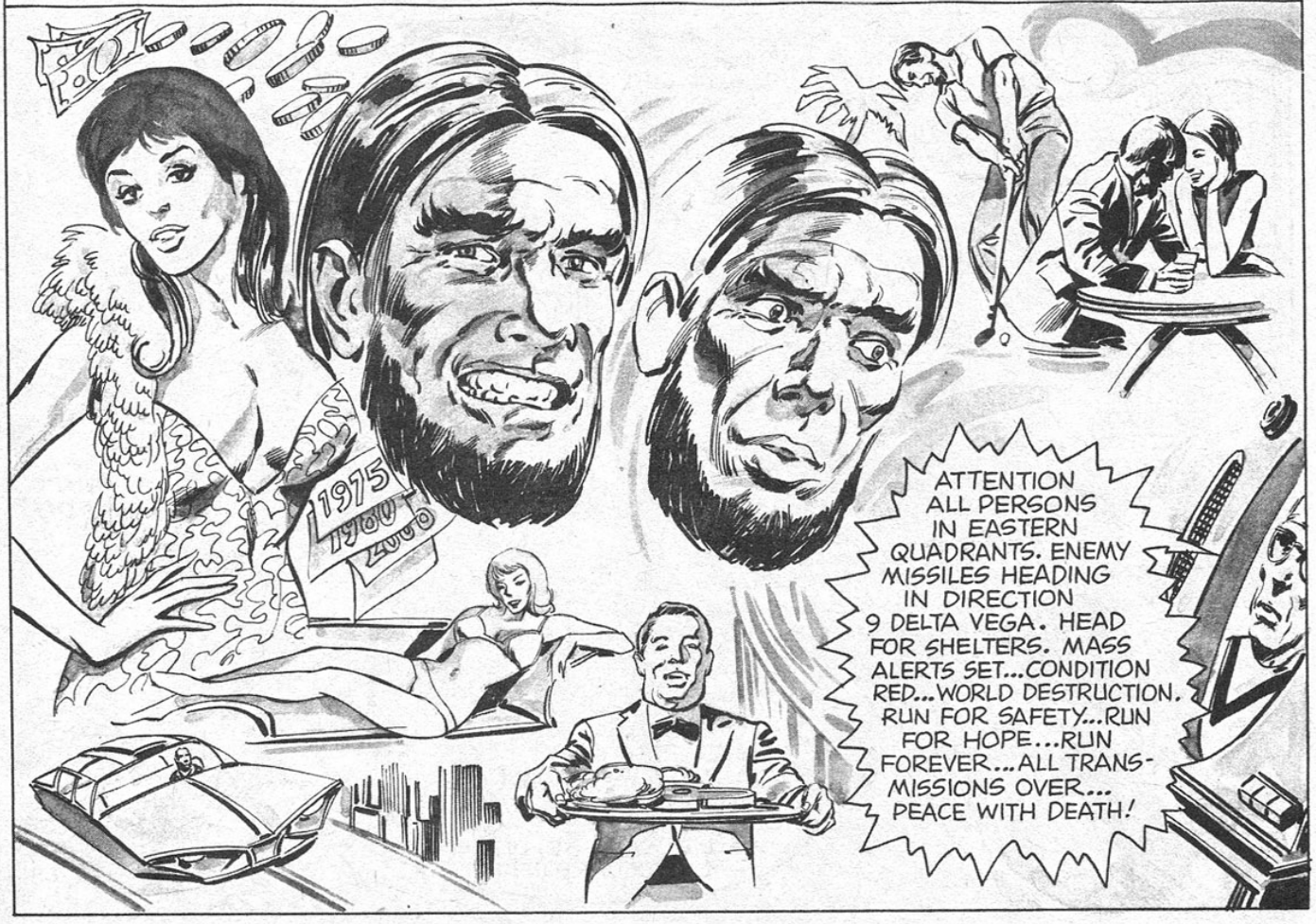
OH, GOD... WHAT DID I DO?
WHAT IF SOMEONE SAW... NO! WE WERE ALONE! THERE'S NO WITNESSES!
BUT I'D BETTER GET RID OF THEM ...FAST!
NUCLEAR REACTOR
THIS IS FRIDAY! BY THE TIME ANYONE COMES TO THIS PART OF THE BUILDING, THE RADIATION SHOULD HAVE COMPLETELY DISSOLVED THEIR BODIES, LEAVING NO TRACE OF THEM...
NOTHING TO POINT TOWARDS ME...
NOTHING!
SUDDENLY, PALE IMAGES BEGIN TO PRESS OUTWARDS FROM THE BODIES OF THE DEAD SCIENTISTS...
"NOTHING," ASHE? WHAT ABOUT YOUR OWN MIND...? WHAT ABOUT YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS?
YOU'RE FINISHED, ASHE! WE KNOW YOUR PAST... YOUR FUTURE... AND YOU'RE DOOMED!
N-NO! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE. YOU'RE DEAD! ...GONE! I KILLED YOU MYSELF!
THERE IS NO HOPE FOR YOU, ARTHUR. KILL YOURSELF NOW! SAVE YOURSELF THE AGONY... THE ETERNAL AGONY!
HA HA HA HA HA
DIE, BLAST YOU! DIE!
WHY DON'T YOU DIE? WHY??
YES, ARTHUR... WE'RE DEAD... OUR FLESH NO LONGER BREATHES... OUR EYES NO LONGER MOVE... WE ARE DEAD... BUT WE ARE NOT GONE. WE ARE HERE, AS WE SHALL ALWAYS BE, UNTIL YOU, TOO, ARE DEAD.
YOU CAN NOT KILL THAT WHICH IS ALREADY DEAD, ARTHUR ASHE!


ARTHUR ASHE RUNS MADLY DOWN THE NARROW METAL CORRIDORS, BUMPING AIMLESSLY FROM SIDE TO SIDE. EYES GLARING, HE GRASPS A GLASS BEAKER AND QUICKLY SWALLOWS THE SICKLY YELLOW LIQUID...
"NO, DON'T DRINK THAT, ASHE!"
"PUT IT DOWN, OR YOU'RE A DEAD MAN!"

DEAD MAN? NO... NOT QUITE...
I'M ARTHUR ASHE... THE IMMORTAL!
NOW GO! YOU FRIGHTEN ME NO LONGER. NOTHING CAN HARM THE MAN WHO CAN LIVE FOREVER!
WE'LL BE BACK, ARTHUR... WE'LL BE BACK... WE'LL BE...

AND THE PHANTOMS FADE INTO THE WEST WINDS, SCATTERING THEMSELVES TOWARDS THE HEAVENS...

THE DECADES SLIP QUICKLY BY AS ARTHUR ASHE LIVES HIS LIFE TO ITS FULLEST. WOMEN ARE HIS TO COMMAND... LOVE COMES QUICKLY... EASILY. THE WEALTH OF WORLDS IS HIS TO OWN, AND THE HORRORS OF HIS FOREVER-BIRTH IS QUICKLY LAID ASIDE... BUT THEN...


1975
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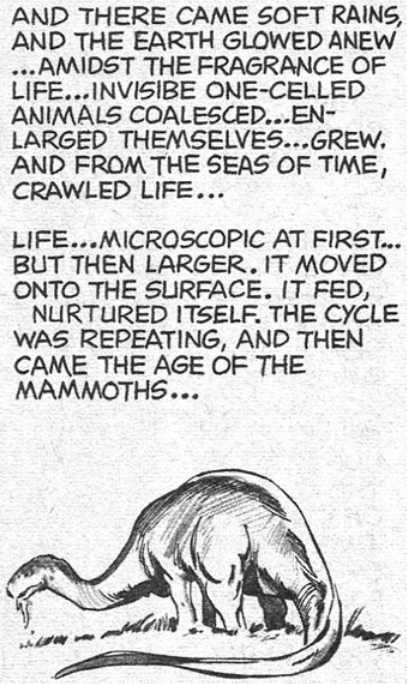
2000
ATTENTION ALL PERSONS IN EASTERN QUADRANTS. ENEMY MISSILES HEADING IN DIRECTION 9 DELTA VEGA. HEAD FOR SHELTERS. MASS ALERTS SET... CONDITION RED... WORLD DESTRUCTION. RUN FOR SAFETY... RUN FOR HOPE... RUN FOREVER... ALL TRANSMISSIONS OVER... PEACE WITH DEATH!

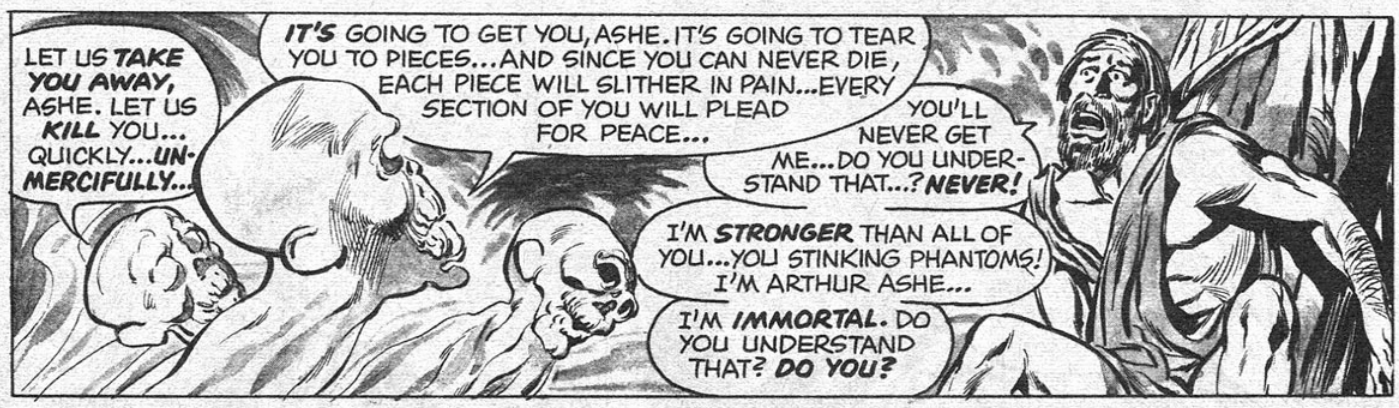
THE BOMBS CAME QUICKLY AND CITY AFTER CITY LAY LEVELED UNDER THE PALE-WHITE SHROUD OF DEATH. THE AGONIZED SCREAMS OF MILLIONS ARE HUMBLED BY THE COLLAPSE OF CENTURIES; TIME STREWN CARELESSLY... FORGOTTEN... OVER THE CRUMBLED RUINS OF MAN...
AND ALL ARE DEAD, SAVE FOR ARTHUR ASHE...THE MAN WHO COULD NOT DIE!
YOU'RE ALONE NOW, ASHE...
ALONE EXCEPT FOR US...
...THE MEN YOU MURDERED...
WHAT DO YOU WANT? WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS TO ME?
BECAUSE WE HATE YOU, ARTHUR.
BECAUSE WE WANT TO DRIVE YOU INSANE ...TO TEAR YOUR MIND APART.
YOU ALONE KNOW ...JUST YOU AND US AND THAT IS HOW IT SHALL BE UNTIL YOU PLEAD TO US FOR DEATH!
YOU'RE WRONG...MAN WILL BE BACK...I KNOW IT. THE LIFE CYCLE WILL START AGAIN, AND THIS TIME, WHEN MAN APPEARS, I'LL BE KING...THE KING!
AND YOUR KINGDOM WILL BE A VAST DUSTFILLED WASTELAND. LIFE SHALL NEVER RETURN...
NO! THEY WILL COME BACK. THEY HAVE TO...THEY...
HUH? WHERE ARE...THERE'S NO ONE HERE...
WAS I DREAMING? AM I STARTING TO SEE THINGS? OH GOD, I HOPE NOT!

I'M ALONE...ALONE THERE'S NO ONE ELSE ...NO ONE TO RUN FROM ...NO ONE TO...TO TALK WITH...

THE MONTHS FADE SLOWLY...TORTUOUSLY INTO YEARS. THE YEARS CREEP DESPERATELY INTO CENTURIES. AND THE CENTURIES CRY OUT IN PAIN... AND ENDLESS HEAVY PAIN...
AAAYYEEEEE


AND THERE CAME SOFT RAINS, AND THE EARTH GLOWED ANEW ...AMIDST THE FRAGRANCE OF LIFE...INVISIBE ONE-CELLED ANIMALS COALESCED...ENLARGED THEMSELVES...GREW. AND FROM THE SEAS OF TIME, CRAWLED LIFE...
LIFE...MICROSCOPIC AT FIRST... BUT THEN LARGER. IT MOVED ONTO THE SURFACE. IT FED, NURTURED ITSELF. THE CYCLE WAS REPEATING, AND THEN CAME THE AGE OF THE MAMMOTHS...

...AND IN THE SCHEME OF THINGS, ARTHUR ASHE WAS VERY SMALL INDEED...


LET US TAKE YOU AWAY, ASHE. LET US KILL YOU... QUICKLY...UNMERCIFULLY...
IT'S GOING TO GET YOU, ASHE. IT'S GOING TO TEAR YOU TO PIECES...AND SINCE YOU CAN NEVER DIE, EACH PIECE WILL SLITHER IN PAIN...EVERY SECTION OF YOU WILL PLEAD FOR PEACE...
YOU'LL NEVER GET ME...DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT...? NEVER!
I'M STRONGER THAN ALL OF YOU...YOU STINKING PHANTOMS! I'M ARTHUR ASHE...
I'M IMMORTAL. DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT? DO YOU?

...AND CAME THE NUMBING COLD...
I'LL BE KING...NAY, A GOD HIMSELF OVER THE NEW MEN... GOD... ARTHUR ASHE...THE IMMORTAL GOD!
HA HA HA HA HA HA!
...DO YOU...DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT?? I'LL OUT-LIVE ALL OF YOU... ALL OF YOU!!
AND ALL IS LOST FOR ARTHUR ASHE FOR THOUGH HIS BODY STILL LIVES, HIS MIND IS LONG DEAD... DEAD AND FORGOTTEN...
WHERE ARE YOU NOW? GONE, HUH? GONE FOREVER? HA! HA! FOREVER...I TOLD YOU I'D WIN...I TOLD YOU! HA! HA!
ALONE... OH GOD... ALONE...
WAITING...ALONE... FOR THE NEW MEN... ALONE...OH, GOD! I DON'T WANT TO BE ALONE...
YOU WERE RIGHT, DAMN YOU! YOU ARE RIGHT!
THERE WON'T EVER BE A MAN. I'LL NEVER BE A GOD...
LET ME DIE... PLEASE LET ME DIE... PLEASE...
IF YOU WISH TO DIE, TAKE THIS...THE MANTLE OF DEATH, AND DRAPE IT AROUND YOURSELF. YOU WILL BEGIN TO AGE...AND WITHIN THE HOUR, YOU WILL DIE!
ALONE... FOREVER...
YES...GIVE IT TO ME... GIVE IT!

HIS STRENGTH BEGINS TO WANE AS HE PLACES THE MANTLE ABOUT HIS SHOULDERS... BUT NOT BEFORE HIS RESTING PLACE HAS BEEN PREPARED...
YOUR LIFE WAS WASTED, ASHE. YOU HAVE LIVED YOUR LIFE SEARCHING FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE...FOR A GOAL THAT COULD NEVER BE YOURS...
YOU ARE A FOOL!
YOU'RE NOT A MAN, ASHE! A MAN WOULD HAVE FOUGHT ON... FOUGHT FOR HIS BELIEFS. YOU ARE A COWARD!
IT WAS ALL A MISTAKE... A HOPELESS MISTAKE!
IS THAT SO? LOOK UPWARDS, ASHE... LOOK OVER THERE...BY THE SIDE OF THE GRAVE...
WITH GREAT EFFORT, ASHE FORCES HIS ANCIENT EYES TOWARDS THE RIM OF THE GRAVE, AND AS HIS LIPS TURN TO WHITE DUST, A SILENT SCREAM OF ENDING HORROR FILLS THE NOW RANCID AIR...
HA HA HA
HA HA HA HA HA
EEEYYAAAGGHH
End.
HIS FLESH AND BONE CRUMBLE TO FINE DUST AND ARE CAUGHT BY THE FOUR WINDS WHICH SEND THEM ACROSS THE FACE OF A NEW BORN WORLD...A WORLD OF INNOCENCE...A WORLD NO LONGER TAINTED BY THE MINDLESS GREED KNOWN AS MAN.

THE VAMPIRE
NO. 2
ANOTHER ONE FROM PSYCHO'S GRUESOME GALLERY!
by Steve Hickman

THIS IS THE PLANET SADE... IT IS A HARSH WORLD... FRAUGHT WITH SAVAGERY... BLOOD... AND DEATH!
AAAAAAAAA
HEE HEE!
THESE GAMES PROVIDE SUCH EXQUISITE SPORT! A SHAME WE'VE JUST WITNESSED THE LAST EVENT OF THE DAY...
REVOLUTION!
Script by Rick Poulos
Art by Sean Todd
Inked by Dan Adkins
SIRE--SOME PEOPLE ARE NOT CONTENT WITH YOUR RULE! THE SPEAK OF REVOLUTION!
MY MEN HAVE MANAGED TO EXECUTE MOST OF THE CONSPIRATORS... BUT THE SITUATION REMAINS TENSE --EXTREMELY TENSE!
MORRO, YOU INSUFFERABLE INCOMPETENT--DON'T BOTHER ME WITH TRIFLES!
GET THEIR ATTENTION ON SOMETHING ELSE! DISTRACT THE PEOPLE WITH MORE GAMES!
I DON'T CARE IF YOU MUST PILLAGE AND PLUNDER HALF THE PLANETS IN THE GALAXY--
I WANT MORE SLAVES FOR THE GAMES!
MORE SLAVES DO YOU HEAR ME? MORE SLAVES!
AS YOU WISH, SUPREME ONE!
PLANET AFTER PLANET FALLS BEFORE GENERAL MORRO'S INDOMITABLE MIGHT...
FROOM!
RETREAT! RETREAT! THE INVADERS ARE EVERYWHERE!
BUT NO MATTER! GENERAL MORRO... SUMMON THE REST OF THE IMPERIAL GUARD!
YES, EXCELLENCY--AS YOU COMMAND!
I WISH TO RETURN TO THE PALACE--BEFORE I AM OVERCOME BY THE HEAT AND NOISOME STENCH OF THE ARENA!
GET UP THE RAMP! MOVE, YOU SPINELESS DOGS--OR FEEL THE SHARP BITE OF MY NEURONIC WHIP!
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO WASTE HERE--NOT WITH OTHER WORLDS RIPE FOR SLAUGHTER--WAITING TO BE CONQUERED!

WITH A SEEMINGLY ENDLESS SUPPLY OF SLAVES THE BARBARIC GAMES CONTINUE...
THE CROWD IS A LARGE ONE, YOUR MAJESTY! THE GAMES ARE AS POPULAR AS EVER!
YET STILL I'M TOLD THE PEOPLE AREN'T SATISFIED!
WE MUST INSTILL A SENSE OF NOVELTY IN THE GAMES-- MAKE THEM MORE ENTERTAINING!
I WANT EVERYONE TO RESPECT ME-- PAY HOMAGE TO ME-- CONSIDER ME A BENEVOLENT RULER!
THE GAMES ARE BEING HELD EVERY DAY--AND THE HORRIBLE TORMENT...
RAARGH
...THE UNABASHED TORTURE...
...AND THE GRISLY DEATH GOES ON UNABATED!
PLEASE DON'T LET ME DIE LIKE THIS!

THE KING IS A GOOD PROVIDER! NOT ONLY ARE THE GAMES FREE-- THEY'RE BETTER THAN EVER!
IT'S ALL A TRICK!
THE KING FORCES US TO LIVE LIKE ANIMALS-- AND TREATS US LIKE DOGS AS WELL!
YOU'RE SPEAKING TREASON, BOY!
AND THE REWARD FOR TREASON IS DEATH!
TTZZZK!
HE WAS BUT A BOY-- AND THE IMPERIAL GUARDS SLEW HIM!
HE WAS RIGHT! THE KING DOES TREAT US LIKE DOGS--BUT NO LONGER!
DEATH TO THE KING!
LET US FIGHT AS ONLY FREE MEN CAN!
GET BACK YOU WITLESS DOLTS-- OR I'LL FIRE--
ON!
THE CITIZENS ARE ATTACKING THE NORTH GATE!
THE REVOLUTION MUST BE CRUSHED BEFORE IT GETS OUT OF HAND!
GIVE NO QUARTER! KILL EVERYONE!
SOLDIERS ARE COMING--WITH GUNS AND TANKS! WE ARE DOOMED!
NO! THERE'S STILL A CHANCE!
THE DOOR TO THE ANIMAL PENS-- OPEN IT!

THE ANIMALS ARE LOOSE ...RUNNING RAMPANT!
ALL UNITS OPEN FIRE!
TOO LATE! THEY'RE STARTING TO CHARGE!
HISSSSSS
FALL BACK!
OUR BEAM BOLTS ARE USELESS! NOTHING CAN STOP THEM!
ZZZZK!
ZZZZK!
DISPATCH TO GENERAL MORRO: HALF THE IMPERIAL GUARDS WIPED OUT. SITUATION CRITICAL. SUGGEST YOU TAKE EVERY MEASURE TO PROTECT HIS EXCELLENCY.
--TASK FORCE LEADER IMPERIAL GUARD.
YOUR MAJESTY! WE HAVE TO BLAST OFF BEFORE THE MOB ATTACKS THE SPACE FORT!
DON'T BELABOR THE OBVIOUS, MORRO! I KNOW WHAT MUST BE DONE!

WITH A MUFFLED ROAR THE KING AND HIS ROYAL STAFF ESCAPE THE COLLECTIVE WRATH OF THE CITIZENS OF SLADE...
BRRR

WHAT IN THE EIGHT HELLS WAS THAT? ARE WE UNDER ATTACK?
NO, GENERAL! THE MAIN ROCKET TUBE'S MELTED--FUSED SOLID!
WITH LUCK--WE CAN MAKE IT TO THAT NEARBY PLANET...BUT WE'LL BE--MAROONED THE REST OF OUR LIVES!
SSKREEE
THUD!
EEEEE
CRASH!
THEN LET'S TAKE IT! WE HAVE THE WEAPONS AND ARMAMENT!
I CLAIM THIS WORLD AS MY NEW EMPIRE--AND THAT CITY WILL BE MY CAPITAL!
NOTHING THAT LIVES CAN STAND UP TO OUR ATOMIC RAY RIFLES!
THAT, MY GOOD GENERAL WAS EXACTLY WHAT I HAD IN MIND!
YYAAARRRGGHH!
THE BLASTED PLANTS ARE CARNIVOROUS MAN EATERS!
DON'T WASTE TIME TALKING! KEEP SHOOTING! KEEP SHOOTING!
THAT'S WHY THE CITY'S WALLED OFF...TO PROTECT IT FROM THE JUNGLE!
EEEYAGH!
IIIEEEEH!
THERE'S TOO MANY OF THE INFERNAL THINGS--CAN'T KILL THEM ALL!
RUN FOR THE CITY! IT'S THE ONLY HOPE!

THE FORTIFIED CITY LIES STRAIGHT AHEAD--ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT SMALL RIVER!
AND ONE FINAL PLANT BARS MY PATH TO SAFETY!
BUT I CAN'T LET THAT STOP ME NOW--
NOOOO
...AND I WON'T!
SLTK
RUNCH!
RATHER YOU MY LOVELY LITTLE PRINCESS THAN ME!
I'M THE LAST ONE! MY DREAMS OF POWER-- MY DREAMS OF GLORY... GONE FOREVER!
YET, I STILL RETAIN THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL--MY LIFE!
WAIT! SOMETHING'S SNAKING ABOUT MY ANKLE, GRABBING ME, PULLING ME UNDER THE SURFACE--
WHA
MAN CANNOT ESCAPE HIS FATE! IT IS ALWAYS THERE--
INEXORIBLE, ALL POWERFUL... AND WAITING IN...
THE END

Prologue:
THAT PAINTING-- IT'S ONE OF THE MOST FLAWLESS WORKS I'VE EVER SEEN!
TELL ME, OLD MAN-- IS IT FOR SALE? HOW MUCH WOULD YOU WANT FOR IT?
DO NOT TROUBLE YOURSELF WITH THE PRICE, THOMAS APOLLO! IF YOU DESIRE THE PICTURE, YOU CAN HAVE IT FOR FREE!
YOU KNOW MY NAME! WHAT IS THIS-- SOME KIND OF GAG? AM I ON TELEVISION?
AH, BUT YOU WILL CARE-- SOON! FOR, THE GAME OF LIFE AND DEATH IS FAST APPROACHING!
I REALLY DON'T CARE-- JUST SO LONG AS I CAN KEEP THE PAINTING!
AND YOU WHO-- NOW A PAWN-- WILL BECOME A PRIME MOVER!
CRYPTIC OLD SONUVAGUN! THIS THIS PARK'S FULL OF NUTS!
LATER THAT EVENING...
THAT GIRL-- TIED TO A STAKE, BEING MENACED BY A SCALED, THREE-HEADED MONSTROSITY...
SHE'S BEAUTIFUL-- ABSOLUTELY STUNNING! I'VE NEVER SEEN A GIRL QUITE SO LOVELY!
THE ARTIST THAT PAINTED HER IS FANTASTIC!
BUT, I HAVE OTHER MATTERS TO ATTEND TO!
MAY THE SEVEN GODS OF GOODNESS WATCH OVER THEE!
INSANITY IS A RELATIVE THING, THOMAS APOLLO-- AS YOU WILL SOON BE FINDING OUT!
SUDDENLY, THE ROOM STARTS TO SHIMMER, VACILLATE, BECOME GHOST-LIKE. OBJECTS MELT AND RUN TOGETHER LIKE WET WATER COLORS. ALARMED, THOMAS APOLLO JUMPS TO HIS FEET...
...ONLY TO FIND HIMSELF FLOATING, FALLING RUSHING THRU THE MYRIAD, TWISTING BARRIERS THAT SEPERATE TIME FROM SPACE!

THE QUEST!
I MUST BE GOING MAD! JUST SECONDS AGO I WAS IN MY APARTMENT, ADMIRING A PAINTING!
...AND, NOW I'M ON A STONE-COLD FLOOR-- RESPLENDENT IN SILVER ARMOR WITH A SWORD AT MY SIDE!
THERE IS NOTHING TO FEAR, MY BEMUSED AND BEFUDDLED FRIEND! YOU ARE IN THE MYSTIC TOWER OF SHAMAN THE SORCERER!
BUT, THERE IS LITTLE TIME TO TALK! MY DAUGHTER IS HELD CAPTIVE BY THE VILE KING MOLOCH!
AT ALL COSTS-- SHE MUST BE RESCUED!

Script by Rick Poulos • Art by Chick Stone • Inked by Chic Stone

THEN, THAT PAINTING YOU GAVE ME...
IT WAS BUT A LURE-- A MEANS OF FINDING A NOBLE HERO!
WE REPRESENT THE FORCES OF GOODNESS AND LIFE! OUR STRUGGLE IS ETERNAL WITH WICKEDNESS AND DEATH!
ON MY WORLD-- DEATH USUALLY WINS! ISN'T THIS BATTLE GOING TO BE A BIT ONE-SIDED?
PERHAPS! BUT THE ABSTRACT ELEMENTS OF FAITH AND HOPE ARE OURS TO EMPLOY!
AND, AT TIMES-- THEY CAN BE MIGHTY FORCES, INDEED!
OUR JOURNEY IS FRAUGHT WITH DANGER! THE FIRST WILL BE NAVIGATING THE PRECARIOUS WINDING PASSAGE THRU THE FANGED MOUNTAINS!
IF YOU WERE ABLE TO BRIDGE THE DIMENSIONAL GAP-- WHY DON'T YOU MAGICALLY TRANSPORT US TO MOLOCH?
BECAUSE I AM OLD, MY SON-- AND MUST CONSERVE MY STRENGTH!
THE BATTLE WE ARE ABOUT TO WAGE WILL TAX MY POWERS AS IT IS!
THIS IS THE ONLY WAY THAT WE CAN... UGHHH!
EEEEE!
LOOK OUT! HARPIES!
INSTINCTIVELY, APOLLO LASHES OUT WITH BLINDING SPEED-- AND THE HARPY WRITHES AND SHUDDERS, IMPALED ON THE DEADLY SILVER SWORD...
THIS BLADE IS BEYOND BELIEF! IT STRIKES FASTER THAN THE SPEED OF THOUGHT!
JUST HOLD ON, SHAMAN-- I'LL BE WITH YOU IN A SECOND!
NO! HOLD YOUR GROUND! ONCE YOU RELAX YOUR GUARD -- THE OTHER WINGED TERRORS WILL ATTACK!

THEY'RE CIRCLING IN CLOSER-- HEMMING ME IN FROM ALL SIDES!
CAN'T KILL THEM ALL! THEY'LL HAVE ME DOWN FROM SHEER WEIGHT OF NUMBERS!
GET BACK ON THE OFFENSIVE! THE BATTLE CAN STILL BE OURS--
--IF I CAN REACH MY STAFF OF POWER IN TIME!
THE WIZARD CALLS UPON THE FORCES OF NATURE! ANGRY, BLACK, BOILING CLOUDS SEETHE IN A SULLEN, SOMBER SKY! THE OMINOUS RUMBLE OF THUNDER GRATES ACROSS THE AIR...
THOSE BAT-LIKE HORRORS ARE FALLING BACK! THEY SENSE SOMETHING'S ABOUT TO HAPPEN!
KRA-BLOOM!

--AND, JAGGED BOLTS OF LIGHTNING, LIKE WEIRD, UNEARTHLY HIEROGLYPHICS, CARVE THEIR WAY THRU THE STORM-- TO SNUFF OUT THE LIVES OF THE COLD-BLOODED AERIAL ABBERRATIONS!
KA-KRACK!
SCREEEE!
BOOOM!
SCREEEE!
SCRREEEE!
WITH THE SKY CLEANSED, THE OLD SORCERER WAVES HIS STAFF IN A MYSTICAL PASS-- AND THE FEARSOME FORCES OF NATURE ABATE!
AND SO, SEVERAL HOURS LATER, AFTER PICKING THEIR WAY THRU THE NARROW MOUNTAIN PASSAGE...
SHAMAN! I FEEL AS IF WE'RE BEING WATCHED! AND, THE AIR-- SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT ABOUT IT!
IT FEELS OPPRESSIVE-- DANK AND EVIL!
NOW THAT WE HAVE CROSSED THE PEAKS-- WE ARE ENTERING THE OUTSKIRTS OF MOLOCH'S LAND!
THE GREATEST TEST OF OUR POWER LIES AHEAD! FOR IT IS NEARING DUSK-- AND WE MUST STILL CROSS THE BLACK MARSH!

I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY THIS PLACE IS CALLED THE BLACK MARSH! IT'S SO DISMAL!
WE MUST BE EXCEEDINGLY CAREFUL! TO STRAY FROM THE PATH WOULD BE CERTAIN DEATH-- SWALLOWED UP BY THE BOG!
IT'S A WONDER WE'LL FIND OUR WAY THRU THIS SWAMP! I CAN BARELY SEE A FOOT IN FRONT OF ME IN THIS INKY BLACKNESS!
IT IS NOT THE DARKNESS, THOMAS APOLLO -- THAT I AM CONCERNED ABOUT!
THEY ARE TROLL-LIKE BEINGS-- BARELY HALF HUMAN!
AND, THEY HAVE A PERVERTED AFFINITY FOR EATING THEIR PREY!
THE MOUNTS, SHAMAN-- THEY'RE GETTING RESTLESS, EDGY! THEY'RE SHIVERING LIKE THEY'RE SCARED!
IT MEANS WE'VE BEEN FOUND BY THE DWELLERS OF THE MARSH-SLIME-SLINKING CREATURES THAT WALLOW IN THE MUCK AND MIRE!
BY THE SOUND OF THEIR MUFFLED FOOTFALLS, THEY HAVE US SURROUNDED!
AND THAT FETID ODOR -- THAT UNIMAGINABLE STENCH-- IT CLOYS AT MY NOSTRILS!
THEIR EYES ARE LIKE RUBIES--BLOOD RED-- GLOWING LIKE BURNING COALS!
THE SILVER SWORD IS GOING TO DRINK DEEP TONIGHT!
AND, DRINK DEEP IT DOES AND AS THE ALMOST MINDLESS PACK OF MARSH DWELLERS SWELLS UPON THE MEN LIKE A LIVING WAVE OF FLESH! POISONED FANGS RAZOR-SHARP TALONS CLAW INEFFECTUALLY AT APOLLO'S ARMORED FORM AS HE HACKS AND HEWS AWAY AT THE SLAVERING, BRUTISH, BEASTIAL THINGS!
THESE ACCURSED ANIMALS ARE WORSE THAN THE HARPIES.
HURRY, SHAMAN, ONLY ONE OF YOUR SPELLS CAN SAVE US!
I KNOW-- BUT, THESE SLIME-SLINKERS SEEK TO WREST THE ENCHANTED STAFF FROM MY GRIP!

I CAN NOT EVOKE ANY POWERS ON OUR BEHALF WHILE THESE SORDID CREATURES PROFANE THE MYSTICAL ROD WITH THEIR GRASP!
I HAVE ONLY STRENGTH FOR ONE FINAL TUG...
UNH-- I'VE WRENCHED IT FROM THEM! IT IS MINE AGAIN!
SHIELD YOUR GAZE FROM MY STAFF OF POWER, THOMAS APOLLO-- I AM ABOUT TO HURL A MOST POTENT SPELL.
AND NOW LET THE WONDER-MENT UNFOLD!
THAT BLAZING WHITE LIGHT, SO PRISTINE PURE-- IT'S BLINDING!
THE SENSITIVE EYES OF THE MARSH MEN CAN'T TAKE IT! THEY'RE SLINKING OFF-- IN PAIN!
WE'RE ON THE EDGE OF THE SWAMP! WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR NOW-- EXCEPT MOLOCH!
AN HOUR PASSES! FLAMING BANNERS HERALD THE APPROACH OF THE DAWNING SUN-- AS APOLLO AND THE ANCIENT WIZARD TRAVEL THRU A SMALL VALLEY WHERE RUSTLING TREES WHISPER EVIL THOUGHTS!
UNTIL THEY SUDDENLY CONFRONT THE BLACK CASTLE OF KING MOLOCH!
MY DAUGHTER, ILLANA, IS HELD CAPTIVE WITHIN YON EDIFICE! BUT, BEFORE WE ENTER-- YOU MUST DEFEAT THE GUARDIAN OF THE GATE!
I CAN SEE HIM FROM HERE! HE'S VIRTUALLY A GIANT! BUT, I CAN'T LET THAT STOP ME! I'VE COME TOO FAR TO FALTER NOW!
LITTLE HUMAN FOOL-- YOU THINK YOU CAN PIT YOUR FEEBLE MIGHT AGAINST MINE?
IF NOT-- I'LL DIE TRYING!
THOSE WORDS WILL BE YOUR EPITAPH!
BUT WAIT! WHAT TRICKERY IS THIS?
A LITTLE SOMETHING CALLED JUDO-- WHICH IS PROBABLY BEYOND YOUR UNDERSTANDING!
I HOPE MOLOCH IS WATCHING -- BECAUSE THERE'S A LESSON HE CAN LEARN FROM THIS!

THE MOAT IS WELL STOCKED WITH RAVENOUS REPTILES. THE GUARDIAN IS A THREAT NO LONGER.
ILLANA-- SHE'S BEING GUARDED BY THAT DRAGON... JUST LIKE IN THE PAINTING!
WELL, SHE WON'T BE THERE FOR LONG-- ONCE THAT THREE HEADED LIZARD TASTES THE BURNISHED BLADE OF APOLLO!
THE ONLY THING YOU'LL DO, MY PUNY, POMPOUS FOE-- IS STAIN THE COURTYARD FLAGSTONES WITH YOUR LIFE'S BLOOD!
MOLOCH-- ARROGANT FIEND, I'LL TRIUMPH OVER YOU YET!
NEVER! NOT TILL THE SUN STOPS SHINING-- AND THE STARS FALL FROM THE SKIES!
EVIL IS THE GRANDEST FORCE IN THE UNIVERSE! NO MATTER HOW MANY HEROES YOU LINE UP TO OPPOSE ME --I ALWAYS WIN!
THERE'S ALWAYS A FIRST TIME-- FOR EVERYTHING!
GO BACK-- PLEASE, I BEG YOU! FATHER HAS HAD MANY FIGHT FOR ME-- TO WIN ME MY FREEDOM!
THE COURT-YARD IS LITTERED WITH THEIR BONES! YOU CAN'T DEFEAT THE DRAGON-- NOTHING CAN!
IT'S SCALED HIDE IS THICKER THAN I HAD THOUGHT! IT STANDS UP TO SOME OF MY STRONGEST BLOWS!

ROOOO! HISSSS!
THE SILVER SWORD HASN'T LET ME DOWN YET!
I'LL SLAY THIS TEN-TON, THUNDERING NIGHTMARE-- I SWEAR IT!

BUT SUDDENLY, SLOW DEATH IN THE FORM OF A SIX-FOOT TALON-- STRIKES!
ARRGH-- IT MOVES FASTER THAN I COULD HAVE THOUGHT POSSIBLE!
AND... I WAS CLOSE... SO VERY CLOSE--

LIKE A RAG DOLL-- BROKEN, BATTERED, BLEEDING... APOLLO DRAGS HIMSELF WITH THE LAST OUNCE OF HIS STRENGTH TO THE GIRLS SIDE...

AND, WITH HIS DYING BREATH, HE SAYS...
I LOVE YOU, ILLANA...
--LOVE... YOU...

EVIL-- THE ETERNAL POWER-- WINS AGAIN! DEATH IS ALWAYS THE VICTOR!
GIVE UP, SORCERER! ADMIT IT, YOUR DAUGHTER IS MINE-- YIELD TO ME!

GIVE UP? YIELD? THOSE WORDS ARE ALIEN TO ME, MOLOCH!
AND I VOW I WILL BE BACK! EVIL WINS FOR THE PRESENT -- BUT, NOT FOREVER!
HAHAHAHAHA! WE SHALL SEE, SHAMAN! WE SHALL SEE!

HEY, POPS-- YOU SELLIN' THIS PICTURE? I GOTTA HAVE IT-- JUST GOTTA!
IT IS YOURS-- BUT THE PRICE MAY BE MORE THAN YOU THINK!
AND SO, THE BATTLE OF LIFE AND DEATH GOES ON... AND ON... AND ON...
The End

DREAM PLANET
THE HUM OF THE AIR PROCESSORS, THE CLATTER OF MAGNETIZED FOOTWEAR ON DECKS AND STAIRWAYS, THE OCCASIONAL ANNOUNCEMENT OVER THE INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM--ALL THESE SOUNDS FORMED A REGULAR AND FAMILIAR ATMOSPHERE WITHIN THE SLEEK, AGGRESSIVE SPACE GUARD CRUISER. BUT SUDDENLY ALL THE ROUTINE CALMNESS VANISHED AS THE CRASHING SOUND OF THE ALARM SYSTEM CLANGED! CALL TO STATIONS! STAND BY FOR ACTION! PLANET LANDING IN ONE HOUR!
ASTROGATION CREW, WEAPONS SYSTEM PERSONNEL, GUIDANCE SECTION, LANDING CREW, OFFICERS, CREW MEMBERS--ALL GET TO THEIR STATIONS WITH SPEED AND SURENESS! THE COMMUNICATIONS SECTION, MISSILE CONTROL--EVERY TINY PART OF THE GREAT SPACE WANDERER IS SOON FUNCTIONING ON A RED ALERT BASIS!
I DON'T LIKE THIS! I'M SCARED AND I DON'T LIKE IT!
WHAT'S THE TROUBLE, FOSTER? YOUR DREAMS GOT YOU UP A TREE AGAIN? DIDN'T YOU HEAR THE DOCS TELL US WHAT'S GOING ON?
I HEARD 'EM! BUT A LANDING ON A HOSTILE PLANET IS BAD ENOUGH WITHOUT THOSE STINKING DREAMS TO GO WITH IT!

Script by Phil Seuling • Art by Serg Moren • Inked by Serg Moren

PLANET FALL WAS ONLY LONG MINUTES AWAY! THE ANTICIPATION GREW INTO A KNOT IN EACH MAN'S STOMACH! ANOTHER OF THE WAITING LANDING CREW SPOKE UP TO TRY TO RELIEVE THE ANXIOUS SILENCE!
WHAT KIND OF DREAM? YOU KNOW WE ALL HAD BAD ONES TOO SINCE WE GOT NEAR THIS PLANET!
BAD? THIS WAS WORSE THAN ANYTHING I'VE SEEN OR HEARD OF BACK ON EARTH!
ALMOST WITHOUT WANTING TO, FOSTER BEGINS TO DESCRIBE THE NIGHTMARISH HORRORS!
I FOUND MYSELF ALONE ON THIS PLANET WE'RE HEADED FOR, SEE? AND I'M IN THIS KIND OF JUNGLE! ALL OF A SUDDEN I'M IN THIS CLEARING AND RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE IS...
...THIS BIG--THING! IT'S ALL OVER COVERED WITH SLIME! YOU CAN SEE IT DRIPPING AND SHINING, ALL WET AND GRAY!
WHEN IT SAW ME IT BEGAN TO MOVE TOWARD ME, AND IT SOUNDED LIKE PULLING YOUR FEET OUT OF MUD! SUCK! SPLUSH! LIKE THAT! I FIRED AT IT BUT IT KEPT COMING FASTER!
I RAN AND I COULD FEEL IT TOUCH MY BOOT AS I BARELY GOT AWAY!
FINALLY, I COULDN'T HEAR IT ANY MORE AND I SAT DOWN, CHOKING FOR BREATH. I LOOKED AT MY BOOT WHERE I FELT IT TOUCHED ME, AND, OH, GOD! THERE WAS THIS SLIME ALL OVER MY BOOT! IT LOOKED LIKE IT WAS STILL ALIVE, AND I TRIED TO HACK IT OFF! BUT IT COVERED MORE OF MY LEG THE MORE I TOOK OFF!
IT WAS GROWING ON ME! I SCREAMED, BUT NOW MY HAND WAS GRAY AND SLIMY! IT WAS SPREADING FAST AND I COULD SEE MYSELF COVERED WITH THIS CREEPING HORROR--
...AND THEN I WOKE UP! I WAS STILL SCREAMING!

EVEN THE SUIT'S BODY TEMPERATURE CONTROL UNIT COULDN'T OVERCOME THE TERROR OF THE MEMORY, AND FOSTER'S FACE WAS COVERED WITH A FILM OF SWEAT!
IT WAS SO REAL IT SHOOK ME UP! I COULDN'T WORK AND FINALLY HAD TO TELL THE DOCS IN PSYCH-SECTION!
PLENTY OF US DID THE SAME THING! I WONDER HOW MANY OTHERS REPORTED THOSE NIGHMARES?
HOW MANY HAD REPORTED TO PSYCH-SECTION WITH TERRIFYING DREAMS TO DESCRIBE? ALMOST EVERY MEMBER OF THE CREW, INCLUDING OFFICERS, IF THE TRUTH WERE KNOWN! BUT THE DOCTORS CONCEALED THE EXTENT OF THE TROUBLE, TO AVOID WIDESPREAD FEAR OR EVEN HYSTERIA, IN THIS ISOLATED AND CONFINED SHIP!
THE DREAMS WERE ALL DIFFERENT, BUT EACH WAS A HORROR! THE WEAPONS SYSTEM CHIEF COULD BARELY DESCRIBE HIS! WALKING THROUGH TALL TREES, I REMEMBER! AND VINES, AND STRANGE LEAVES, AND FERNS! TALL FUNGUS, AND ROOTS THAT KEPT TRIPPING ME!
IT WAS QUIET AND THE AIR WAS HEAVY AND DAMP AND...SOMEHOW MENACING! I BEGAN TO BE A FRAUD FOR NO REASON, AND I TRIED TO TURN AROUND TO GO BACK!

I BLUNDERED INTO A STRANGE PLANT, SINUOUS AND WEIRD, WITH LONG ODD LEAVES LIKE I NEVER SAW BEFORE! SOME OF THOSE LEAVES STUCK TO ME, ON MY ARMS, MY LEGS, ONE ON MY HEAD! AND WHEN I RIPPED THEM OFF, THE CLOTH OF MY SLEEVES CAME OFF WITH THEM...AND SQUARES OF SKIN! THE GROTESQUE THING WAS GRABBING AND HOLDING WITH MILLIONS OF TINY ROOTS! EACH TIME I PULLED ONE LEAF OFF, TWO MORE ATTACHED THEMSELVES. I SCREAMED AND PULLED AT IT...AND I WOKE UP!
RIPPING AT MY OWN FLESH--MY GOD!

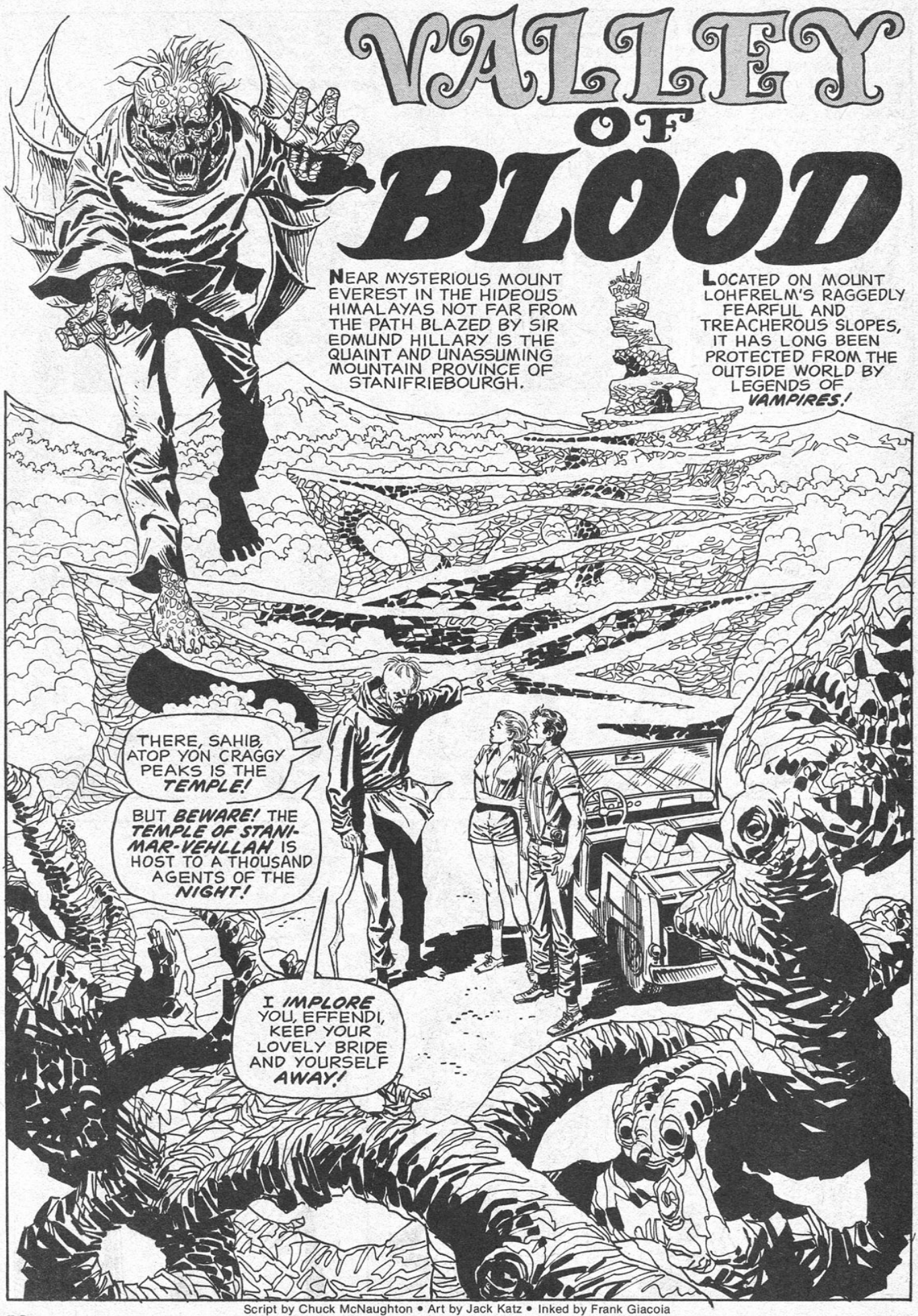
THE COMMANDER OF THIS MIGHTY RIDER OF THE SPACEWAYS DREAMED NO BETTER THAN THE OTHERS --AND PERHAPS MUCH WORSE...
MY DREAM COVERED A GREAT DEAL OF TIME! FIRST THERE WAS THE WANDERING THROUGH A DESERT-LIKE AREA! I WAS GOOD AND LOST!
I STUMBLED AT THE EDGE OF A CLIFF AND COULDN'T CATCH HOLD ON THE ROCKS! DOWN I WENT, INTO A CONE-SHAPED CRATER! WHEN I GOT UP I COULD SEE CAVES IN THE SIDES OF THE CRATER!
THEN I SAW WHAT LIVED IN THE CAVES!
I WAS FROZEN TO THE SPOT! IT SAW ME! LIKE A CATERPILLAR, BUT A GIANT ONE OUT OF A NIGHTMARE! IT REARED UP AND CAUGHT ME!
CAN YOU CONTINUE, COMMANDER?
LET ME GET CONTROL AGAIN! IT WAS AS REAL AS IF I WERE LIVING IT! LET'S SEE WHERE WAS I?

I MUST HAVE FAINTED. WHEN I AWOKE I WAS IN A MASS OF THREADS TIGHTER THAN STEEL, SUSPENDED AS IF IT WERE A HUGE SPIDER WEB THAT HELD ME! I COULDN'T MOVE EXCEPT TO BREATHE.
IS THIS THE HELL ONLY A DREAM CAN OFFER?
OR IS THIS MONSTROSITY REALITY?
AFTER HANGING FOR HOURS, IT SEEMED LIKE THE THING CAME UP BEHIND ME WHERE I COULDN'T SEE IT! I COULD HEAR IT MOVING AND THEN MY BACK SEEMED TO RIP APART! IT BURNED AS IF A BLOW-TORCH HAD BEEN APPLIED!
FOR DAYS I HUNG THERE IN BURNING AGONY, AND HUNGER AND HORROR! I THOUGHT THAT THE TORTURE MUST BE OVER, BUT MY MIND SOON PIECED TOGETHER THE ANSWER, AND I KNEW THE WORST WAS YET TO COME...
WHEN THE EGGS HATCHED...!
...AND FOUND ME A READY AND WAITING FOOD SUPPLY!

DREAMS SUCH AS THE COMMANDER'S COULD NOT BE DISMISSED. SOMETHING WAS WRONG ON BOARD SHIP, AND THE PROFESSIONALS OF MEDICONTROL AND ESPECIALLY PSYCH-SECTION WENT TO WORK TRACING PATTERNS, INTERVIEWING, FEEDING THE MIGHTY SHIP'S COMPUTER THE RESULTS OF THEIR RESEARCH!
...AND MEANWHILE THE DREAMS CONTINUED...
...AND THE ONLY THING TO EAT WAS THE FRUIT! AND IT CRYSTALIZED AFTER YOU SWALLOWED IT, INTO RAZOR EDGES INSIDE YOUR...
...LONG, AND SNAKE-LIKE, BUT THIN AS WIRES! THEY PENETRATED THE FLESH AND ENTERED THE BODY, FEEDING ON THE BONES!
SPIDERS, DOC! A THOUSAND SPIDERS! BUT EACH LEG HAD SUCTION DISCS LIKE LEECHES, AND THEY DRANK BLOOD! THEY COVERED ME....!
AFTER THEY HAD BLINDED ME AND REMOVED MY TONGUE, THEY PUSHED ME AROUND WITH TENTACLES! THEY MADE ME A TOY TO PLAY WITH AND TORMENT! A MUTILATED TOY...!
SOON THE COMPUTER GAVE BACK ITS INFORMATION, AND ITS EVALUATION, AND ITS SUGGESTIONS! THE EXECUTIVE OFFICERS MET TO MAKE THEIR DECISION.
THEN IT'S AGREED THAT WE WILL FOLLOW THE MOST LOGICAL COURSE OF ACTION! CALL THE CREW TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND WE WILL INFORM THEM!

THE PLANET IS OBVIOUSLY INHABITED. THE DREAMS WE HAVE BEEN ENDURING ALL BEGAN WHEN WE ARRIVED WITHIN IMMEDIATE COMMUNICATION DISTANCE OF IT! WE MUST CONCLUDE THAT THE DREAMS WERE DIRECTED AT US FROM THE SURFACE OF THE PLANET! DR. HORLA, CHIEF OF PSYCH-SECTION, WILL EXPLAIN THE REST!
THERE ARE MANY DEFENSES A RACE OF PEOPLE CAN MAKE. FORCE, FOR INSTANCE, OR PASSIVE RESISTANCE, OR GUERILLA WARFARE! APPARENTLY, THIS PLANET'S INHABITANTS ARE PHYSICALLY WEAK AND DEPENDENT ON TELEPATHY TO ATTACK THEIR ENEMIES! TWO SHIPS BEFORE US WERE LOST WHEN THEY TRIED TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE PLANET! WE BELIEVE NOW THAT THEY WERE DESTROYED BEFORE THEY LANDED, BY TELEPATHY SUCH AS WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED!
BOOMM
HOWEVER, THE LOSSES OF THE TWO SHIPS WERE LONG AGO, LONG BEFORE WE HAD THE SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT WE HAVE NOW! FOR INSTANCE, YOUR BAD DREAMS ARE OVER! WE HAVE PUT OUT A DAMPING FIELD BY MEANS OF THIS NEW AND POWERFUL PSYCHIC BROADCASTER, AND WE CAN NO LONGER BE REACHED BY THE TELEPATHY OF THE PLANETARY INHABITANTS!
WHAT DO THESE NATIVE LOOK LIKE? AND HOW ARE WE GOING TO HANDLE THEM?
WE WILL LAND AND LEAVE THE SHIP IN LARGE NUMBERS, ARMED. THE COMPUTER HAS TOLD US, (AND WE AGREE WITH THE THEORY), THAT THE NATIVE RACE IS VERY WEAK, NEARLY UNABLE TO MOVE, WEAPONLESS AND HARMLESS! WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR! AND NOW OUR WAITING TIME IS OVER! SOON HE WILL BE UPON THEM, HUNDREDS OF US! AND WE WILL KNOW HOW TO HANDLE THEM!
ON THE PLANET BELOW...
NO LONGER DO WE HAVE TO FEED UPON EACH OTHER! AGAIN WE HAVE FOOD FROM THE HEAVENS, AS WE DID TWICE BEFORE! BE READY! WE HAVE WAITED LONG...!

...AND NOW THE WAITING TIME IS OVER! SOON THEY WILL BE WITH US... HUNDREDS OF THEM...
...AND WE WILL KNOW HOW TO HANDLE THEM!
SERG MOREN '10


VALLEY OF BLOOD
NEAR MYSTERIOUS MOUNT EVEREST IN THE HIDEOUS HIMALAYAS NOT FAR FROM THE PATH BLAZED BY SIR EDMUND HILLARY IS THE QUAINT AND UNASSUMING MOUNTAIN PROVINCE OF STANIFRIEBOURGH.
LOCATED ON MOUNT LOHFRELM'S RAGGEDLY FEARFUL AND TREACHEROUS SLOPES, IT HAS LONG BEEN PROTECTED FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD BY LEGENDS OF VAMPIRES!
THERE, SAHIB, ATOP YON CRAGGY PEAKS IS THE TEMPLE!
BUT BEWARE! THE TEMPLE OF STANI-MAR-VEHLLAH IS HOST TO A THOUSAND AGENTS OF THE NIGHT!
I IMPLORE YOU, EFFENDI, KEEP YOUR LOVELY BRIDE AND YOURSELF AWAY!

Script by Chuck McNaughton • Art by Jack Katz • Inked by Frank Giacoia

FROM THE WEST HAVE COME MANY SCUTIBLE EXPLORERS, SAHIB BARRY, WHO ALL HAVE VANISHED-- GONE TO THE (YOU'D CALL IT) VAMPIRE CASTLE! LOST!
SUPERSTITION SPROUTS--
"SUPERSTITION SPROUTS FROM THE SOIL OF IGNORANCE." DARGOSI IS FAMILIAR WITH THE SAYING OF THE EXPLORERS, SAHIB!
YES, EFFENDIS, DARGOSI HEARD THAT MAXIM SAID MANY TIMES-- BY EXPLORERS WHO NEVER CAME BACK!
AH, OH-- SUPERSTITION SPROUTS--
MY LORD! A SKELETON!
VALERIE, WHAT A FIND!
THESE RUINS MUST BE THOUSANDS OF YEARS FALLEN!
WHAT, VAL--? OH-- IT'S JUST A SKELETON...
BUT BART!-- LOOK AT IT'S TEETH!
THE VAMPIRE LEGENDS MUST BE TRUE!
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
BART-- I'LL NEVER GET THAT HIDEOUS SKULL OUT OF MY MIND AS LONG AS I EVER SHALL LIVE!

AS THE JEEP BARRELS OVER SPIDERWEB ROADS, CAREENING TIPSILY, ITS WEIGHT SHIFTS AND VELOCITY SLACKENS AND A CURVE IS NOT NEGOTIATED.
TWO FLYSPECK FIGURES FALL ALMOST LAZILY INTO THE SWAMP...
VALERIE! OH, VALERIE!
YES, THIS IS A CLINIC! I AM DR. OURIJAY...
HELP! HELP HER, DOCTOR!!
I UNDERSTAND YOUR WIFE IS TYPE O-NEGATIVE, AND NEEDS A TRANSFUSION!
I HAVE TYPE O-NEGATIVE, MR. BART-- DR. OURIJAY...
SHE NEEDS A TRANSFUSION IMMEDIATELY, MR. BART!

THE TRANFUSION IS ALMOST COMPLETE... WE WON'T KNOW TILL LATER...
MMMRRRPPHH!
THE TRAGEDY IS THAT MY WORDS HAVE FALLEN ON DEAF EARS!
TIME WILL TELL, SAHIB.
OK, DOC...
DOCTOR OURIJAY! COME QUICKLY!
VALERIE'S GONE! GONE!!
AGAINST INKY HIMALAYAN MIDNIGHT SKYLINE, TWO FIGURES, BLACKER THAN ALL EMPTINESS, LAY IN WAIT...
AWZZZZ
HSSSSSSS
AND SUDDENLY POUNCE! THEY FLUTTER-SWOOP WITH DEADLY EVIL, GLIDING GRACEFUL PURPOSE! -- AN INVINCIBLE VAMPIRE AND HIS NEW BRIDE.
WHERE COULD SHE HAVE GONE, DOC...? HOW?!
THE EAST HAS MANY CLOUDY MYSTERIES, BART BARRY-- ONE ONLY CAN EXPLAIN STRENGTH AFTER GREAT BLOOD LOSS...
VAMPIRES!!

AND RELIEVE THEIR PLACABLE VICTIM OF HER PRECIOUS BODILY FLUIDS.
AN HOUR LATER, BART BARRY'S GHOSTLY YELLOW LANTERN ILLUMINES A HORRIFYING SPECTACLE.
SHE'S DEAD, DOC! AND HER BODY IS COLD-- DEATHLY COLD!
COLD, YOU, SAY?
VAMPIRE MARKS EFFENDI!
SOMEHOW I FIND THIS HARD TO BELIEVE. I COME FROM A CIVILIZED COUNTRY, AN EDUCATED LAND--
I ONCE COULD SING SONGS OF MOCKERY ABOUT SUCH THINGS!
BUT I CAN SING LAUGHINGLY NO MORE!
NOW THAT MY WIFE IS ONE!
IT COULD ONLY BE! IT MAKES SENSE!
THE LOGIC OF IT ALL IS HIDEOUS!
BELOW THE VAMPIRE TEAM, A SHEPHERD TENDS HIS FLOCK.

DOWN FROM THE ESCARPMENT HURTLE THE HORRENDOUS HEMO-VORES!
NNOOooo!
BORUOORGGH HISSSH!
NEXT MORNING...
QUICKLY!! WE MUST TELL GOOD DR. OURIJAY!
MY WIFE AND DARGOSI HAVE STRUCK AGAIN!
YES, SAHIB!
WE CAN PROTECT YOUR WIFE NO LONGER! AUTHORITIES WILL BE TOLD AND SCANDAL WILL BREAK UNLESS YOU KILL HER YOURSELF!
BUT-- MY WIFE IS WITH CHILD!

WE SHARE ALIKE, VALERIE!
YES, MY NEW HUSBAND!
AND SO AN INNOCENT YOUNG GIRL IS EASY PREY FOR THE BLOODSEEKING HEMO-VORES...
AFTERWARD THE INEVITABLE DISCOVERY... DISCOVERY INEVITABLY AFTERWARD...
AT RISK TO YOUR REPUTATION, SAHIB, THE AUTHORITIES MUST BE INFORMED!
NO!
I'M SURE YOU WOULD NOT LIKE THE PRESS TO LEARN OF THIS, SAHIB!
YOU'RE BLUFFING, DOC!
ANY ADVERSE PUBLICITY WOULD PROBABLY ONLY INCREASE INTEREST IN THE TOURIST TRADE, SAHIB BARRY!--
BUT WOULD NOT HELP YOUR INSURANCE COMPANY IN AMERICA!
I'M SURE YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH THE CUSTOMARY INSTRUMENTS!
I'M SURE YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH THEM?
I HAVE SEEN MOVIES-- READ BOOKS...

STANIFRIEBOURGH, EFFENDI, WE ALL WOULD LIKE THAT "SUPERSTITION SPROUT FROM THE SOIL OF IGNORANCE!"
EVIL MOCKERY!
BY THE LIVID LAKE OF MOUNT LOHFRELM A TRAGIC SCENARIO DEVELOPS...
BLOOOOOD!!
AH-WHA-HAA
SSKRAIIF!
WHUTHUUMP!
THUDDOK!
GASP!
VALERIE! OH, MY LOVELY VALERIE! I HAD TO DO THIS!
DO THIS FOR OUR UNBORN CHILD'S SAKE!
SO, SAHIB BART BARRY, I HOPE YOUR STAY IN STANIFRIEBOURGH HAS EDUCATED YOU IN OUR QUAINT NATIVE WAYS...
DARGOSI!!!
...WAYS OF QUAINT SUPERSTITION!
THE END